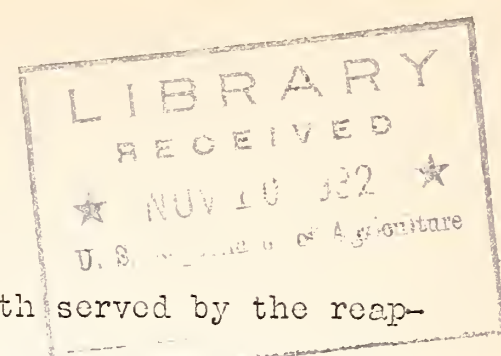


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PIES MADE OF DRIED FRUITS  
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Convenience and flavorful variety in the menus are both served by the reappearance in the fall of all the different dried fruits -- prunes, apricots, peaches, figs, dates, raisins, pears, and apples. But whichever dried fruit you happen to use, you have an advantage over the housewife of a few years ago, for the methods of drying and storing these fruits are so much improved that all of them can be cooked much more quickly than formerly and without a preliminary soaking.

Since dried fruits have undergone a marked withdrawal of the water which they formerly contained, the first step in preparing most dishes from dried prunes, apricots, peaches, pears, and apples is to restore the original condition as nearly as possible. This is most often done by stewing the fruit in water to cover until it is tender. Formerly it was thought necessary to soak dried fruits for a number of hours before cooking them, but the newest ways of drying have made this flavor-destroying soaking unnecessary. Indeed some varieties and some brands of prunes and apricots can be eaten just as they are, and of course figs, raisins, and dates are eaten without stewing except when they are wanted for certain desserts. After stewing any of the dried fruits are ready for pie, soufflé, pudding, salad, and many other uses. In the case of dried fruit in steamed or baked puddings which are cooked slowly for a long time it is not even necessary to precook it by stewing.

The kind of pie you make from any of the dried fruits, whether open-faced or two-crust, cross-cross or meringue topped, is a matter of personal taste. A quick and easy way is to stew the prunes or apricots or whatever fruit you are going to use, add sugar and spice to taste, and, for prunes, a little lemon, and thicken the juice and pulp with cornstarch to make it into a pie filling. Then put it into a baked crust or tart shells, and dress it with whipped cream or a meringue made of egg white.



Or you can make a two-crust pie and cook it completely after putting in the filling. Apricot pie is one of the most delicate and delicious of this group of two-crust pies, especially when a little butter is added to the filling.

Raisin pie is generally made with two crusts. Raisins are so very sweet that many people prefer raisin and cranberry pie. Figs and dates are also very sweet and for most tastes a little goes a long way. So after cooking they are more often used as tart filling than for a whole pie. Dried pears are also good in pie or "torte," made with a basis of graham cracker crumbs.

Don't forget to use a pinch of salt in the filling for any of these pies. The recipe for a prune custard pie below has been tested by the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and found excellent. This bureau says, also:

"The method selected for the restoration of evaporated water in dried fruits depends upon the variety of fruit. Some prunes, for instance, have been found to require no cooking-- only soaking. Other prunes are best when dropped into boiling water and allowed to soak for an hour, followed by a 30-minute period of boiling. Peaches, on the other hand, are usually considered best when cooked. Drop them into cold water instead of boiling and allow them to soak 1/2 hour and cook 15 minutes. With some varieties a 5-minute longer period has been found necessary. Most pears are best when soaked 15 minutes in cold water, but cooked for 25 minutes. Apricots and apples require no soaking. Drop them into boiling water and cook for 30 and 15 minutes respectively. Figs may be put into cold water without soaking and cooked 20 to 30 minutes, depending upon the softness of the fruit. Raisins cook in 10 minutes in boiling water. Soaked fruits should be cooked in the same water in order that no soluble material may be lost. Some of the fruits are best liked when a little sugar is added. About a quarter of a cup of sugar to each cup of apples, peaches, and pears is good, one-half tablespoonful per cup of raisins, 1 tablespoonful for figs and 2 tablespoonfuls for prunes."

#### Prune Pie

3/4 cup prune pulp (1/2 pound)  
2 eggs  
1 cup sugar

1 cup milk  
Juice 1/2 lemon  
Pinch salt

Mix together well. Cook in double boiler until thickened. Pour into shell of unbaked pastry and cover with strips of pastry. Bake in moderately hot oven (375° to 400° F.).

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